

Honorifics

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/34467022) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/34467022>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	SK8 the Infinity (Anime)
Relationship:	Hasegawa Langa/Kyan Reki
Character:	Hasegawa Langa , Kyan Reki
Additional Tags:	Post-Canon , Fluff and Humor , Getting Together , what Langa wants Langa gets
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2021-10-13 Words: 3,885 Chapters: 1/1

Honorifics

by [scarlett_starlett](#)

Summary

In which Langa overhears Reki use an honorific with his name once and suddenly wants to hear Reki call him that all the time.

Notes

no one can convince me that Langa doesn't suffer from only child syndrome and once he gets an idea stuck in his head, he wants it *bad*.

Langa never thought much of the honorific system that Japan used in everyday life. He is aware that many of his otherwise rude greetings and conversations are excused because he is a foreigner, being only half-Japanese and taking after his father more. His Japanese has improved greatly after two years in Okinawa; his grades reflect the frequent tutoring Reki had been giving him since he realized his writing was not only atrocious but Langa only knew two of the kana systems and few kanji. But he's aware that he still has an accent and said accent tends to get worse if he's nervous or has to read something too complex.

Literature class was horrific for him for this reason although it did help improve his reading so it was a necessary pain.

Reki also made it fun.

But there were some cultural aspects that Langa never quite got the rhythm of and one of them was the honorific system.

In Canada, people just used each other's first names and honorifics were more like titles to denote a person's career—like Doctor—and Langa liked that, liked the ease of simply learning someone's name and not needing to ask their age, their occupation, or their gender to figure out which honorific to use lest one came off as extremely rude to said person.

It was tiresome to Langa, which is why he took to Reki so quickly.

Reki never used honorifics with him although he did force him to bow and use them with elders, usually with a hissed whisper and gratuitous apologies for his rude behavior. Langa eventually relented and began using them around certain people but only because it was a small group and easy to remember what honorifics to use.

This changed one day.

He hadn't been hiding or particularly quiet when he heard it. He had been making his way to the back porch, where Masae had said Reki was with the twins. He'd spotted Reki's bright red hair first and sped up, a smile twitching on his lips as it always does nowadays when he sees Reki.

Then he heard it.

"Aw, don't cry, you'll be able to see Langa-kun in a few minutes, okay, Nana-chan?" Reki croons, bouncing his little sister on his knee as she sniffles but preens under her older brother's doting.

Langa-kun echoes in Langa's head, growing louder and louder as his face heats up and his heart starts up an embarrassingly fast rhythm. He's been called that before—by ADAM, by some of the girls in their class when they whisper about him, by the few family members he has in Okinawa from his mother's side—but it's different coming from Reki, it's so different.

It's nice, Langa realizes, clutching his shirt over his heart. *It sounds so nice coming from him.*

He wants to hear it all the time.

"Oh," he understands suddenly, but not quietly enough because then Reki is looking over his shoulder in relief and calling him over, Nanaka cheering and making grabby hands at him.

"Good, you're here! Nanaka was about to unleash the waterworks if you'd taken any longer," Reki laughs and hands her over, cocking his head when Langa robotically takes the toddler but otherwise doesn't make eye contact with Reki. "Langa? You alright, dude?"

"Y-yeah," he clears his throat. He feels weird. He can't really make eye contact with Reki. That's new. Must have to do with the fact that Langa likes Reki *like that* and he only grasped it just now. "I'm fine."

He's aware that Reki stared at him for a long moment, not believing him at all, but he didn't press because then Chihiro was stomping down the hallway with a bunch of toys in her arms and a devilish gleam in her eye, ready to play with whoever will humor her or else.

But after that day, Langa can't let it go—the sound, the name, the way Reki's voice rose at the vowels like a song, so warmly.

Langa-kun.

Langa-kun, Langa-kun, Langa-kun.

He wants Reki to say it again, to look at him and smile as he does.

He wants Reki to call him that *all the time*.

So, Langa decides to do something about it.

Immediately the next day.

“Neh, Reki?”

Reki...kun? Reki-kun.

Reki-kun, Reki-kun, Reki—

“Yeah, what’s up?” Reki looks up from his notebook at his desk, twirling his pen as he waits patiently for Langa to gather his thoughts.

“Why...” He pauses. How does he ask this without making it obvious that he wants it? The more he thinks about it, the more tiresome it gets. If he has to think about this too hard then he’s just going to go the direct route and ask. But he resists, because he doesn’t want to spook Reki, so he goes with: “Why don’t you use honorifics with your friends?”

“Eh?” Reki blinks and sits up straighter, rolling the question around in his brain. “Ahh... well, I used to. I guess when I got into skateboarding, it seemed a bit...immature?” He laughs nervously, scratching the back of his neck.

“But everyone does it here, even adults.”

“Well, yes. That’s true. I guess what I mean is that when I got into skateboarding and then into “S,” the skaters there didn’t use honorifics. It doesn’t make sense there unless you’re using them to mock someone—you’re there to compete and skate, not exactly to make friends. Although I think it should be about that, too,” Reki adds. He smiles at Langa. “I got used to it and the more I looked into it, the more archaic and just...outdated it seemed. I still use them, of course, especially at school and around people older than me unless otherwise told, but... I guess with my friends, I like to think we’re close enough that I don’t need to use them. Because they know I respect them without the use of them,” Reki answers, so sweetly and wholesome that Langa almost feels bad for what he’s about to do.

Almost.

Langa has always been selfish in a lot of ways.

“Ah,” Langa nods. Then he says, “But what if I want you to use them for me?”

Reki squints at him, like this is some sort of prank he hasn’t figured out yet. “What do you mean?”

“I want you to use one for me,” Langa repeats. He feels like he’s been clear enough but he can *always* be clearer; it’s a skill. Reki hates it sometimes.

“Like...” For some reason, Reki looks conflicted. He looks a bit distressed, his shoulders slumping like Langa’s just told him they can’t skate today after all. Uh oh, did Langa accidentally misunderstand something again? “Like... Langa-san?”

“No,” Langa wrinkles his nose immediately at that. No, no. Not ‘san,’ that was too impersonal and wrong. He wants something else, something *closer*. “Not that one.”

Reki bites his lip a little, not meeting his eyes suddenly.

Ah, he knows.

“But... you’re my best friend,” Reki evades, clearing his throat. “You’re one of the most important people in my life, Langa, that’s why I call you by your name! Because you’re... you’re really important to me.”

Langa preens at that, absolutely thrilled for any and all confirmation about just how much he means to Reki.

But he still wants that honorific.

“You are, too. You’re also very important...to me,” Langa softens his gaze, smiling when Reki looks up from his lap and offers a tentative smile in return, his cheeks a bit pink from the sincere words. “Reki-kun,” Langa adds and watches Reki’s eyes go very, very wide and his face match the color of his hair.

“Wha—oh my god, don’t call me that!”

“Why not?”

“B-because that’s like... urgh, I mean,” Reki looks everywhere in his room, raising a hand to try and cover his face a bit. Langa has a moment of clarity then, watching Reki fumble and flush. Reki might place more meaning in honorifics than he lets people believe. “You’re right, it’s not bad! I guess we can still use it now but, uh...”

“Ah, I see,” Langa pretends to understand. “Then, Reki-chan.”

“NO! DO NOT CALL ME THAT!” Reki shrieks, glowering when all Langa does is tilt his head in faux-confusion.

“Why not, Reki-chan?”

“Using that honorific is—no, y’know what? You’re not getting out of this with the foreigner excuse! You’ve been here two years and honorifics is one of the first things they go over in the workbooks! I *know* you know what that means! Don’t act dumb, Langa, you know that’s for girls and-and—!”

“Cute things,” Langa finishes, smirking when Reki chokes, a hot flush across his cheeks. “I think I’m using it correctly.”

“You’re not,” Reki bites back, giving him a mutinous look.

“I think I am.”

“You’re not!”

“I am.”

“No! I’m not c-cute!”

“Ah, Reki-chan, you’re making such a cute face right now, though,” Langa points out and huffs out a laugh when Reki screams in frustration, the start of a scathing lecture on the tip of his tongue, but the frustration melts away when he sees Langa laughing that rare, breathy laugh of his—so quiet yet so vibrant, making his smile dimple handsomely and his eyes glow that bright winter

hue.

“Yeah, yeah, laugh it up,” Reki exhales sharply, watching him from the corner of his eye. “Langa-kun.”

The laugh cuts off suddenly, Langa flushing pink and turning wide eyes towards Reki. His smile widens, looking like he does when he flies in the track at “S” and nearly touches the stars. Reki glances down at his lap at the look, beginning to understand where this is going.

Ah, I see, he likes it, Reki thinks fondly, then feels embarrassed, like he’s one of the girls at school who giggle and whisper over Langa. But they don’t dare to use his first name like Reki does, they always called him *Hasegawa-kun* and tended to glower at Reki when he first began talking to Langa so casually, so rudely, using his first name with no honorific at all and swinging his arm over his neck like they were long-time friends and not acquaintances that had accidentally met over a runaway skateboard.

“I like it,” Langa says, voicing his thoughts.

Reki looks at him sharply at that, holding his breath.

“When you call me that. I like it. Can you call me that from now on?” he asks, so sincerely that any and all of Reki’s reservations about using it melt away at the look. He just looks so *hopeful*. Reki doesn’t know what his attachment to the honorific is—it’s not exactly odd or unusual for guys to use that honorific amongst each other, either.

Maybe because he’s not from here, it’s more special to him? Reki ponders. He supposes he’d feel fascinated and out of his element if he ever visited the USA or Canada and everyone just casually regarded each other by their names. You could use Mr./Miss but it wasn’t necessary, from what Reki has read and what Langa has told him. No one would think of him as rude or disrespectful if he never used them unlike here, where he’d get dirty looks or pressed lips for regarding someone only by name. Maybe even a lecture, if they were ruffled enough.

“Hm,” Reki picks at the cuff of his sleeve. “Langa-kun?”

“Yeah?”

“Is it because... you don’t use stuff like that in Canada?”

“No,” Langa replies, honestly. “I just like the way it sounds when you say it.”

Maybe too honestly.

“Ah, cut it out, you can’t just say stuff like that over here. People will get the wrong idea,” Reki mumbles, pulling his sleeves cuff over his knuckles and raising it to rub at his nose, trying to hide because it all feels like too much.

Langa merely hums, uncaring.

Then, Reki gets an idea.

A dangerous one.

One that tilts the spotlight too much towards Reki’s feelings, that would reveal so much if he ever actually used it in public, but Reki finds that he wants to try it. He’s 80% sure Langa wouldn’t necessarily understand it if he did; he may not even bat an eye at it. If anything, he can convince

Langa that he'll only use it if he does something amazing or... maybe only in private.

If he likes it.

He may not.

He glances at Langa, then away.

And, maybe, Reki is also a bit tired of losing sleep over this warmth between them; seeing it slip away between his fingers like the sand in the Okinawan beaches every time Langa leaves for the night.

"Although, using -kun isn't anything special here, y'know? If anything, me calling you that might set you back in terms of how close we are. People might think we're not as close anymore if I start calling you that—they might even think I'm making fun of you," Reki fibs innocently, hiding a smile when Langa's brows furrow and a frown pulls his lips. "I guess I would need to call you something else? Maybe..."

Don't say it—you'll regret this. What if he hates it?

(what if he doesn't?)

"La-kun," Reki finally says and his ears go hot because *that's* a nickname he's only said in the safety of his mind. People would know it's a special name, just for Langa. They would know that he's fond of him, that he means something. Reki is about to take it back, laugh it off, when he catches the way Langa's usually pale, cool skin heats up brightly and he actually raises a hand to cover his mouth, like that'd help mask the red that sits high and flushed on his cheekbones.

"Hey, are you okay?" Reki asks, a bit concerned with how red and wide-eyed Langa has gone. He's only seen him that red when they went to the beach once and that'd resulted in a heat stroke and painful, peeling skin. "La-kun? Are you okay?"

Langa drops his head into his hands and now Reki really is concerned, sitting up properly and scooting closer to him, unsure. He's never seen Langa like this—maybe he really doesn't like it? Sure, he turned red, but it could've been in second-hand embarrassment. Reki has experience in that, after all. Not all blushes are good. Maybe he took it too far?

"Sorry, I was just messing with you, dude," Reki forces out, hiding white knuckles inside his hoodie sleeves and hoping he doesn't look as uncomfortable as he felt. "I won't call you that again."

A hand shoots out, grabs his elbow. "No."

His heart lurches. "No?"

"No, don't... don't stop," Langa muffles out. He tugs, a request, and Reki scoots even closer until their thighs are touching, wondering if they're actually going to talk about what's going on between them—about their closeness, their touching. The honorific talk is honestly the last straw for Reki; either things are really, really different in Canada or Langa may not have exactly platonic feelings for him and Reki can finally take this a step further.

Maybe the occasional cuddling they do when it's rainy or one of them is having a bad day should have been the last straw but no, it's the honorifics. It's the cute nickname that Langa is chasing now; nicknames that he's overhead in hallways when he passes by couples—the way their voices go all high and crooning, how their eyes crinkle with their fondness or how their cheeks tint pink

when they first begin using them.

Because that's what this feels like.

Like Langa wants... a cute nickname, just for him.

(and Reki might want one, too, *a lot*)

"I'll get used to it," Langa continues, still buried in his palm. "Just... keep calling me that. Please."

"... Okay," Reki rasps out, then really thinks about it and hesitates. "B-but maybe not... not in front of our friends? Or at 'S' or, well, work? Maybe just privately?"

At that, Langa looks up. Despite the lingering flush on his cheeks, he looks miffed.

"Why not?"

"Because, well," Reki rubs his nose. "People might get the wrong idea. Um, it's one thing to call you Langa-kun. Our friends might look at us weirdly and maybe make fun of us for it a bit but the other one... couples do that a lot. Shorten names and make them cute," Reki mumbles the last bit, avoiding Langa's eyes. "I know you like it but I just wanted to let you know that it might give the wrong idea if we do it in public."

"Because we aren't dating?"

"... Yeah."

"Ah."

Familiar disappointment nestles in Reki's stomach at the usual disinterested response from Langa. Reki doesn't know what he expected—maybe Langa declaring they're dating now, in his usual blunt way, or maybe Langa acknowledging the strangely intense warmth between them—but, then again, maybe this is all in Reki's head.

Maybe Langa just wanted the experience of being called upon with an honorific, so different than with what he grew up with.

Maybe Reki is just projecting again.

"Do you not want people to think we're dating?"

Reki jolts at that. "We *aren't* dating, though. I just didn't want you to be surprised or... uncomfortable if someone mentions it."

"Hm," he shifts and now they're pressed together from thigh to shoulder and Langa is leaning in closer still, his breath warming the side of his cheek. Reki is holding his breath, trying not to let his thundering heart be known yet. "Ki-kun."

Reki stills and then, suddenly, he can feel his heart in his ears and pound in his temples.

There's no hiding it now.

"Huh?"

"I think I'll call you Ki-kun," Langa repeats, satisfied. "Because I always liked the end of your

name. Re-ki. Re-kiiiiii,” his soft voice goes up at the end, stretching out the vowel. “I always liked saying it. So, can I use that?”

Reki’s lips form around words he can’t make out for a moment before he settles on, “Wh-whatever. Do what you want,” and tugs his hoodie sleeves tight over his knuckles again and buries his hot face in them because that’s about all he can stand at the moment, left speechless and screaming inside.

He gave me one—a cute nickname! He... he doesn’t care that people will get the wrong idea?

Reki *hates* that he totally thinks Ki-kun is the cutest name ever and it’s *his* now.

“Kiiii-kun,” Langa coos and Reki clenches his eyes shut tightly when he feels Langa bend down to his level and rest an arm over his back. “I don’t mind.”

Reki muffles out a questioning noise, not ready to look up yet.

“That other people will think we’re dating,” Langa clarifies and that arm resting on his back curves around him with more purpose, his fingers finding the softness of his side and digging in.

Reki swallows; it feels good.

“I think...I would like it, if we were,” Langa carefully says. “I think we should.”

“REALLY?” Reki blurts out, shooting upright and gasping when the back of his head crashes against Langa’s nose. “Ah! My bad! Are you okay?!” Reki frets, carefully grabbing the side of Langa’s face and inspecting the damage. “Does it hurt? I don’t think you’re bleeding... no, you aren’t. Hey, La-kun, does it hurt really bad? I can go get an ice-pack from the kitchen—!”

“You called me it,” Langa wheezes out, one eye shut in pain. He leans in anyway, despite his throbbing nose. “It was cute.”

Reki groans, standing up and unbalancing Langa for a moment. “Okay, enough of that! If you’re gonna’ be embarrassing every time I use it, I’m only gonna’ use it on special occasions!”

“Nooo,” Langa whines, holding his nose. “Ki-kun, don’t! That’s mean!”

“D-don’t—argh, whatever! I’m getting you an ice-pack, though, before it swells. Stay here,” Reki insists, turning on his heel and marching out of his room, heading straight towards the kitchen to grab it. He’s just found it in the freezer when his sister walks in, takes one look at his face, and smirks knowingly.

“Hooh? What’s with that face? You look all sunburnt,” Koyomi taunts. “Let me guess, did Langa finally ask you out?”

“Sh-shut up! It’s none of your business, Koyomi,” Reki hisses, messing up her hair when Koyomi cackles and making a break for it when she gasps in outrage. He slides the door to his room closed just in time and sniggers when Koyomi slaps her hand against it once, promising revenge, and then storms away. He waits there for a second before he turns around, a silly grin on his face as he holds out the ice-pack.

“Here you go! You—are too close,” Reki squeaks when he comes face to face with Langa who, between Reki escaping his sister and shutting the door, managed to silently make his way over to him with only a slight look of discomfort for his nose. It doesn’t even look red anymore.

“So?”

“So what? You put it on your nose, goofy.”

“Not that. Can we?”

Reki tilts his head.

“Date,” Langa insists. “Ah. Please?” he adds, making sure to use the politest form and it’s so endearing that Reki giggles instead of choking, lowering his gaze and closing his eyes when Langa follows. Langa’s nose feels warm as it nuzzles against his own, his hands warmer when they grab his and their fingers interlace. “Kiiii-kun,” Langa sings and Reki feels a burst of warmth and giddiness unfurl in his chest, make his cheeks flush again in delight.

“Um. Okay,” he whispers, returning the nuzzle, trying not to let the blood rush to his head and make him woozy when he feels Langa’s warm breath against his lips, feels something soft and plush brush against the corner of his lips when Langa murmurs his name.

No, Ki-kun now, Reki thinks, his smile widening at the thought, and then Langa’s lips are on his and he melts against his bedroom’s sliding door. One of his free hands lifts to clutch at Langa’s shirt, bringing him closer still as their mouths find a rhythm.

Langa’s going to want him to call him that in public and it makes Reki excited despite the embarrassment he knows will follow, because he can finally have something he’s always wanted but never dared voice for fear of being laughed at.

Then he remembers who their friends even are.

Miya’s never gonna’ let me live this down—is that worth it? He’s going to be so unbearable, so is Shadow. Cherry might even snap. Joe... has used worst names when he’s with his groupies so he’d be cool with it.

Then Langa nips his bottom lip and he sucks in a breath in surprise, lips parting enough for Langa’s tongue to reach in and taste him and Reki suddenly doesn’t care anymore, would happily take all the jeering and laughing in stride. He’d even take Miya challenging him to beefs every time at “S” to make them stop before his ears bleed.

He’ll call him La-kun on live TV in front of the Prime Minister if it meant Langa did that thing with his tongue again.

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